

9 Aug. 1971

Dear Jim:

Enclosed is the material from the Anti-Stalinism Study Group's 6 Aug. International Anti-War Rally. In the pamphlet, in the message to the meeting from the JRCL-RMF Zengakuren, is the statement (to be found at the bottom of the 2nd page): "We hear that in America also, the organizations which are carrying out the struggles of the true vanguard of the working class have met with violent hostility from the Stalinists, the labor union bureaucrats in the pay of the imperialists, and the corrupt 'Trotskyists' who have fallen into pro-Stalinism." We should certainly exploit this in our press! Certainly the Wlers and ISers at the 6 Aug. meeting winced when a member of the ASSG came to this point in the message.

The 6 Aug. meeting was quite long, but very interesting. Mark is sending an account of it to Workers' Action. We had the majority at the meeting if you count sympathizers, the WL having 4 people and IS around 10 people. The SWP, it is rumored (from an ISer), thinks the ASSG is a SL front, which could explain their boycott of the meeting. They drew this conclusion from the participation of members of the ASSG in our Gramma demo.

In reference to the 6 Aug. pamphlet, note the Appendix on pp. 13-15 which clarifies the Kakumaru's attitude on street fighting. Also note on page 4 under Int. Anti-War Struggles how they differentiate themselves from the Chūkaku faction on party building. Also note p. 7 under Sasebo and Oji Struggles where they say exclusive emphasis on confrontation diverts attention away from organizing workers into a conscious, strong vanguard organization. They seem better than a reading of Tsūshen #3 would indicate.

Gene of CWC and I met with Kathy, Phyllis, and Sandy Sat. night for five hours and questioned them closely about the JRCL-Kakumaru's positions, especially on trade union work and the Russian question, but also on their political perspectives, their political history, etc. I won't try to run down everything but only mention a few significant points.

They were not well informed on the trade union work of the Kakumaru but thought that the group did organize factions in Sohyo and Stalinist unions which did not function as open Kakumaru factions. They pointed out that the Tokyo branch of the Japanese National Railway Union was dominated by the Kakumaru. We need more information on this subject, on their attitude towards united fronts, etc. I am going to ask them to try to translate any material they might have access to on these subjects.

In Tokyo they said the Kakumaru youth can assemble about 3000 persons at a rally, but Phyllis indicated it is extremely difficult to get into Kakumaru youth group proper, which might have around 100 members. The standards of membership are high to put it mildly.

Our longest argument was on the Russian question (more on that below), where they did not vacate their position but did seem shaken. They seemed confused about Kuroda's concept of the vanguard party (according to Gene); so am I.

With respect to their own history and perspectives and outlook the following can be said. These are serious people. Of nearly 30 students only these three solidarized with Japanese students, became political and committed to Marxism, and even were willing to go to jail for their actions (they spent 9 or 10 days in prison in connection with the strike--I think). As an aside, only the Kakumaru were willing to defend them against deportation proceedings. All the other groups didn't

see why they should be concerned with Yankee Imperialists. As another aside, although they respect Phillip's knowledge they do not blindly follow his lead. His relations with the Kakumaru began at about the same time as theirs. They have a healthy attitude towards IS (unserious), and characterize them as centrist for their role at the NPAC Conference. They see no independent perspective for the ASSG, and realize that they must eventually "orient" towards one of the ORO's, which they are evaluating. I don't think they have anywhere to go but into the SL given their political attitude on NPAC (Only the SL...!). They seem as individuals willing to work with RMC, Kathy with Ann Sebesta in a union fraction etc. Although they suffer from the weaknesses of the Japanese movement, they are politically much more sophisticated and hard than the bulk of the RMCers out here. We should be able to recruit them or fuse with them in the coming period...barring that they will no doubt remain agents of the JRCL-Kakumaru as they have no respect for the other US groups.

As an indication of their political stature enclosed find Sandy's written draft of her speech at the 6 Aug. meeting. Note the polemic against NPAC which is simply excellent. It would fit nicely into our press as it is simply devastating to the SWP on their role in NPAC. Another indication of their seriousness is that they have a very high technical competence. The meeting was well run, they were prepared, they turned out their pamphlet on short notice, etc. The Bay Area SL should be so efficient!

Your Kuroda-Christ analogy apropos of the isolation of the Japanese Trotskyist movement is well made. On the Russian question I was inclined to give Kuroda the benefit of the doubt as there are translation difficulties and peculiarities associated with the provincialism of the Japanese movement. Saying that, Kuroda is wrong! Kuroda's position is that the USSR (etc.) is a bureaucratically alienated (degenerated) transitional society which he says is a stable historic entity co-existing with imperialism in a symbiotic relationship. The reason that he feels that the bureaucracy is not a new class is simply that they find it advantageous to remain a bureaucracy! This all becomes evident from reading Gakūshu #2 (Kuroda on USSR Theory).

The source of the error lies in Kuroda's monoemphasis on the economics of a bureaucratically degenerated transitional society, which is seen in isolation from the capitalist world and the class struggle, which lacks fundamental contradiction, and is therefore mechanistic. His economic speculations on the USSR and Trotsky's views are interesting, but his conclusions are as near as I can tell non sequitor. More directly he shares the same impressionistic, ahistoric method of Pablo, Shachtman, and (inversely) Marcuse; i.e. the point you made of the historic failure of the Fourth Int. giving both imperialism and the bureaucracy a breathing spell. Trotsky himself admitted this as a theoretical possibility in the sense that a new era of general capitalist progress in the leading countries could not be excluded, pointing out it presupposed the strangling of the proletarian revolution. The point was that imperialism was weakened enough as a world system in 1945 to lead it to a stalemate vis a vis the USSR.

Well, that's very sketchy and maybe not completely accurate, but in my remarks on 6 Aug. in addition to the points Mark reports on, I did emphasize the common thread of a "new, stable historic entity" which runs through Pablo, Shachtman, and Marcuse, and by implication criticized Kuroda's view which is similar. Pablo felt Stalinism to be the wave of the future and capitulated whereas Kuroda doesn't. However, he falls into a strategic error, elevating "Anti-Stalinism" to the level of "Anti-Imperialism" because of his erroneous views on the relationship of the USSR to Imperialism, i.e., symbiotic coexistence.

For the Workers' Bomb  
Foster